CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE INTELLIGENCE PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES

Before considering the adequacy and effectiveness of the work of the Central Intelligence Agency and its relations to our other intelligence agencies, a brief word of background may be helpful.

Although the Central Intelligence Agency is largely an outgrowth of our experience in World War II, it would be wrong to proceed from the premise that prior to the war our Government had operated without intelligence as to the capabilities and intentions of possible enemies or prospective allies. The Department of State had long maintained a widespread information-gathering service. The Army, the Navy and certain other departments of the Government had maintained their own systems of collecting information and producing intelligence.

Prior to World War II, however, we had no integrated secret intelligence service. We had not adequately exploited the available sources of overt intelligence. We had no central agency to coordinate intelligence collection and production, and to assemble the best available intelligence for expression in national estimates to guide in the formulation of foreign policy and the preparation of our defense plans.

In World Wars I and II our European Allies, Great Britain in particular, had placed the product of their intelligence services largely at our disposal. While we can expect in the future assistance from the intelligence services of friends and allies, we have rightly concluded that we should not depend on

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them for our intelligence to the extent we were forced to do in World War I and during the early days of World War II.

It was World War II which showed both our deficiencies in intelligence and also what we could accomplish under pressure. Through the expansion of the facilities of the State Department and the military services, through the Office of Strategic Services -- our first move towards a central intelligence agency -- through enlisting the best personnel that could be found, in and out of Government service, we were turning out a very creditable performance in many phases of intelligence work well before the end of the war.

We now recognize that if we are to have adequate intelligence in times of crisis, we must prepare in time of peace, and we have seriously turned to the task of building up a central intelligence organization. The country has now accepted the verdict, even if somewhat reluctantly, that peace-time intelligence is essential to security and, as many of our military leaders have said, our first line of defense. It took us a long time to reach this conclusion, and we are only now gradually getting over our suspicions of intelligence and our tendency to confuse it with mere intrigue and the more lurid side of espionage. We are beginning to accept it as serious and honorable work and essential to our defense.

It is well to recognize, however, that an efficient intelligence organization cannot be built overnight.

It will require years of patient work to provide skilled personnel to do the job. Blueprints and organization charts, even legislation and ample appropriations will not take the place of competent and highly trained men and

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women. Without them we shall have neither effective intelligence operations nor sound intelligence estimates. Unfortunately, in the difficult organizational period since the war, the future of intelligence as a career has seemed so uncertain that many war-trained and competent men have left the service, and it has been particularly difficult to find recruits to take their place.

Finally, security for our intelligence activities is not always easy to achieve here in the United States. It is not only the penetration of fifth columnists which we have to guard against. We have the general problem rising out of our tradition that all of the affairs of the Government shall be conducted in the open. Sometimes we tend to carry this over even as regards the publication of the intimate details of intelligence operations. In peacetime, particularly, it is not always easy to reconcile our vital interest in protecting the freedom of the press with the need for silence on certain phases of intelligence.

As against these debit items we could cite a long list of highly favorable factors. America has the potential resources, human and material, for the best intelligence service in the world. Within our borders we have every race and nationality, loyal sons speaking every language, travelling and resident in every foreign country. We have a wide geographical base for the development of intelligence work. We have the greatest reservoir of scientific and technical skills. We have important allies abroad who are ready to join their knowledge to ours and to give us the benefit of their years of experience in intelligence. And last, and possibly most important of all, in the field of intelligence work, we can develop the individual initiative, skill and ingenuity of a free people, and, in dealing with our main intelligence antagonists, even though they operate with the iron discipline imposed by the Kremlin, we can

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show that free men can be vastly more efficient than those working for a slave system.

These are some of our great assets; our problem is to mobilize them.

There are real elements of urgency in seeing that this task is accomplished.

(1) America today, as never before in time of peace, is vulnerable to sudden and possibly devastating attack. To meet an initial attack, there are no sure military weapons of defense and it may well be that our best protection lies in adequate advance knowledge of the character and timing of the danger.

(2) A vast area of the world stretching from the Elbe River in Germany to the Yangtse in China is largely behind an iron curtain where the normal sources of information are partially or wholly lacking. The techniques of an intelligence service ought to be one of the important means of penetrating this barrier.

(3) A whole new area of knowledge in the field of science has become vital for our defense. This field cuts across the functions of various Government departments and presents new problems from the viewpoint of intelligence collection and coordination.

(4) The far-flung activities of the fifth column, both here and abroad, present a new type of threat to our security, and we require a concerted intelligence program to counter this danger.

These are only a few of the developments which give to intelligence an importance in our defense system which it has never had in the past in time of peace. Fortunately, these facts are now becoming well understood, and the

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Administration, the Congress and the people share with deadly seriousness the determination that the United States here and now shall build the best intelligence service that our national genius and our great resources can provide.

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